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# Water Pollution Control Permit Requirements for Car Washes

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Water Pollution Control Program technical bulletin

7/2003

Businesses that wash automobiles and trucks at a permanent facility and do not have access to a publicly owned sewage collection system (that is, a sanitary sewer) are required to apply to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources for a Missouri State Operating Permit to discharge the wash water. The wash water must be treated with a system that has been approved by the department before release to the environment. Construction permits are required before construction of such treatment systems.

## General Permit

A permit containing general provisions has been issued for this industry, but it is the responsibility of the individual owner or operator of a facility covered by this general permit to apply.

The general permit is available for car wash wastewater treatment systems with design flows of 50,000 gallons per day or less, including land application systems. In addition, a small amount of domestic wastewater can be treated in the wastewater treatment system.

However, a separate construction permit is required to construct the treatment system for the vehicle wash wastewater.

## Background

Since the 1972 Clean Water Act, discharges of wastewater have been regulated through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). A permit is required for any discharges of potential pollutants to waters of the state unless there is a specific exemption. Since 1974, Missouri has been delegated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to issue NPDES permits. The permits issued by the department are state as well as federal operating permits.

## General Permit Requirements

The general permit requires that discharge water parameters be tested, of which some have specific numerical effluent limits. The permittee is responsible for this quarterly analysis. Further, any treatment system must be designed to be able to treat waters to or below the effluent limits.

Sludges and sediment must be handled in accordance with solid waste disposal rules. In addition, discharge from permitted facilities cannot violate the general criteria of Missouri's Water Quality standards. Some of these criteria are, but are not limited to, dissolved oxygen levels, toxic substances, color, and odor.

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The general permit also has requirements for land application of the wastewater, if this is the chosen method of treatment.

### **Fees and Application Form**

To apply under a general permit, complete application Form E and submit a fee of \$150. The general permit will expire on August 19, 1998 at which time application will need to be made to renew the facility permit.

Applications and fees for general permits should be mailed to the appropriate regional office.

To apply for a construction permit to build a treatment device, complete Forms A, C, and D and submit with a \$500 fee to the appropriate regional office. A regional office map is available on the Web at [www.dnr.mo.gov/regions/deqregions.htm](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/regions/deqregions.htm)

### **Termination of Permit**

The permit may be terminated when activities covered by the permit have ceased. It must be terminated if a transfer of ownership of the facility and its activities has been made.

If such a termination of the general permit is sought, the permittee should submit Form H, Termination of a General Permit. If termination of a site-specific permit is sought, the permittee should request such by letter.

### **For More Information**

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Water Pollution Control Program  
Permits Section  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102  
1-800-361-4827 or (573) 751-6825  
[www.dnr.mo.gov/wpscd/wpcp/wpcpermits.htm](http://www.dnr.mo.gov/wpscd/wpcp/wpcpermits.htm)